

Ink Stained

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Ink Stained

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Summary

Will Graham is in his mid-thirties, the owner and proprietor of a tattoo shop in the French Quarter of New Orleans. When one of his more popular artists up and quits, he's left to pick up the extra work, until Nigel walks in one day for a cover-up job that turns into a whole hell of a lot more.

Notes

Hey, we're BACK!!!! CS here. We haven't really been up to much lately, but this little plot bunny was pestering us, so here's the first chapter of what we THINK is just going to be a short, boys falling in love and working on their issues piece. At least, that's the plan here. But with these guys, who the hell knows. D&D was supposed to be a one shot...

So as usual, we don't own it, we just took it out to get new ink!!! Hope you enjoy!

Love,

CS and Alone

The Lure

Will Graham had been living on his own in New Orleans since he was sixteen. His father kicked him out once he knew he wasn't going to take over the family business, such as it was; a failing boat repair shop that was really just a dump where Mr. Graham could get blackout drunk with his asshole buddies and collect disability checks from the government after his accident in the military.

He'd been tired of the constant bullying and abuse. Verbal and physical. Will liked to fish, tinkered with boat engines on occasion, but it wasn't his passion, not like drawing had been. A "pussy thing like art" wasn't a good enough way to make a living to a man like Will's dad, and it didn't make things any easier that he knew he was attracted to both boys and girls in high school. That was certainly something he could never share openly, though the man called him enough derogatory names. Tensions were heightened until finally, one explosive fight led to the man threatening him with a gun and telling him to get out. Will packed up what he could, threw them in his pickup truck, and headed to the French Quarter to stay with one of his buddies.

He lived with Jimmy and Brian, sleeping on a mattress in a spare room, but he was grateful. They were his best friends throughout high school, lab partners and nerds, but they never judged him for being the weird, quiet kid who sleepwalked or adopted stray dogs or sometimes spent way too long lost in thought staring at his hands.

He skipped out on finishing high school, and instead went to go work at Jimmy's cousins' tattoo shop, "The Lure". There, he was able to hone his skills as an artist, and get plenty of experience working on clients and even making his own designs.

Jimmy's cousin, Margot, was a little older than him, and the kind of woman that would've intimidated the hell out of him if he didn't know her. Drop dead gorgeous, stylish, smart and tough as nails. She'd been to hell and back in her life and she had become very fond of Will, taking him under her wing almost like a little brother.

After many years had passed, Will's skill as an artist had grown, and he'd built a reputation for himself as being the quiet, brooding tattoo artist who took his time with his work and while he was sometimes a little strange, he always produced breathtaking ink. It came as no surprise the day Margot announced she was moving away, going to Spain with her new wife, and wanted to put Will in charge of the shop. He went a step further and bought the shop from her with money he'd saved working for her for so long.

This was where Will found himself today. Age thirty-five. New Orleans, Louisiana, the new owner of a successful tattoo shop in the French Quarter.

Margot had only been gone a week when one of their best artists up and quit.

“Fuck,” Will cursed, long fingers tapping the tablet on his lap to look at Matthew’s schedule. They would have to call and cancel all his future appointments. He’d given no notice at all. Who even knew if they could get the customers to book with another artist. Some would, sure. Others were very loyal and rightfully so. It was a pretty permanent decision to make.

“You’ll get someone. Get the ad up, start taking applications,” Jimmy prodded. Will no longer lived with Jimmy and Brian- he had long since gotten his own place above the shop. But they made an effort once a week to get together for drinks and dinner.

Will rubbed his face in exhaustion and nodded. Of course, he was right, but starting over with anything was always hard, and while Matthew had been a bit unstable, he was at least talented.

The next day, Will was looking through the calendar and saw his next appointment coming up. He needed to take on some extra work to fill in for Matthew, and in a way, he was glad to be doing so. Gave him a chance to flex his creative muscles more.

Nigel. Interesting name.

Clad in black jeans and a black Jimi Hendrix tee shirt, he walked to the waiting room to find the man.

“Nigel?”

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Hiding was not something Nigel had to do very often nowadays, but from his experience, if it *was* something one found himself having to do, it was best done in plain sight. Skulking around, acting like you had something to hide from always made you look suspicious, calling the very attention you were trying to avoid right to yourself. No, the best thing was to walk like you didn't have fuck all to care about and could give two shits less what anyone thought about that.

That being said, when you knew for a fact that you were wanted in connection to certain... *incidents*, (like say the murder of your unfaithful wife and her greasy cunt of a lover) it never hurt to take precautions. Like removing or altering any distinguishing marks that made you instantly identifiable to those looking for you. There was nothing Nigel could do about the scars his body carried, but there was plenty he could do about his ink. It was time for the lovely pinup girl that had kept company with him for more than twenty years to become something else. Nigel would be sad to see her go. After all, theirs was the longest relationship Nigel had ever had.

After getting settled into the apartment he had rented in a decent part of town, it hadn't taken much asking around to discover the best tattoo parlor in the area was a little place called The Lure. The people Nigel spoke to had raved about the artists there and after being assured that it wasn't one of those yuppie joints that catered mostly to the tourist, Nigel had called and made an appointment. Which was how he came to find himself sitting in a small but clean waiting area on a sunny Tuesday afternoon, staring at the art pinned to the walls with growing interest and satisfaction. If this was a representation of the work done here, then he had come to the right spot. Nigel hadn't worked in the business in over a decade and a half, but he knew ink, and the photos and drawings in front of him were beyond good. They popped with color, the lines true and flowing except where they were meant to be jagged and sharp, catching the eye, drawing it to the next intricate turn of the design.

Stepping closer to get a better look at an intricate knot design, he didn't hear the man step into the room, only realizing he wasn't alone when his name was called. Startled, he turned on his heel with a snarl, only to pull up short. The owner of the voice was, for lack of better words, fucking gorgeous. Dark curls that looked perfect for pulling and twisting around a man's fist sat in a riot above eyes the color of the sea in a storm. Stubble shadowed a strong jaw just below perfect, plush lips that were curved in a polite, expectant smile. A quick glance up and down told Nigel the man was slender but strong, not with bulging muscles but instead the whipcord strength of a runner or swimmer. Strong without bulk, flexible and fluid and Nigel didn't bother hiding the fact he liked what he saw.

Curling his own lips into an answering smile with only the barest hint of a leer, he stepped forward, offering his hand. "That'd be me, gorgeous." Claspings the smaller man's hand firmly in his, Nigel held on a bit longer than what could be considered polite. "And who might you be?"

Will stepped closer and extended his hand, not quite making eye contact. A briefly shy, flickering blue gaze that looked him up and down appraisingly before settling on his mouth. Fuck, this guy was good looking. Will could feel his cheeks heat up, and he adjusted his glasses with his free hand nervously. "Will Graham. I own this place but looks like I'm also your artist for today as well. Come on back with me," he said with a crooked smile. As he turned, he could almost feel the man's deep-set, intense eyes on his body, and it half made him wish he'd worn something a little baggier, and half made him glad he hadn't. He knew his jeans were a little too snug. Oh well.

Nigel let his eyes take in the lovely view of Will from the back, lingering just a bit on the sweet swell of the younger man's ass in very tight jeans, before making an effort to reign in his dick before it got him into trouble again. The last time he had let his libido make decisions for him, he had ended up married and just look how *that* shit show had turned out. Pushing those unpleasant memories from his mind, Nigel allowed himself to be led into the

back of the shop and took a seat on the reclining chair that Will was waving him into. “What happened to the guy I was supposed to see?” Small talk wasn’t something Nigel normally bothered with, but the younger man was far too tempting for Nigel not to try and distract himself somehow.

Will pulled up a rolling chair and grabbed a binder full of pages of various tattoos and drawings. He spread thick thighs wide as he moved closer to the chair he directed Nigel to and pumped a lever beneath it to raise himself up closer to his level. “Ah, Matthew. Well if you know him well, you know he’s prone to various bouts of temperamental angst. This time he took off ‘for good’, or so he says. He apparently needs to ‘spread his wings’. Hell if I know. Here’s my work, to give you some ideas what I can do,” Will offered, handing it to him.

Nigel snorted in derision at the comment, taking the book offered to him and skimming through the pages with an appreciative eye. “These are fucking good, angel. I can honestly fucking say I’m looking forward to having your hands on my skin after seeing these.” Nigel’s tone was teasing, but his compliment was sincere. Will was obviously very talented and any misgivings Nigel might have had about letting the younger man ink him in such a visible spot dissipated. Closing the book, Nigel pointed with a thick finger at the pin-up girl on his neck. “I need this covered but I don’t want it to *look* like I’ve had something covered up, you know what I mean?” Taking a folded scrap of paper from his back pocket, Nigel handed it to Will with a smile. “This is what I had in mind. Do you think you can make it work, *ibuitel*?”

That accent...Eastern European? Russian? No, that wasn’t quite right. The way he spoke, the pet names and overt flirting brought a warmth to Will’s cheeks he could feel embarrassingly crawling up from his neck. He avoided eye contact, but that didn’t help much; there were large veiny hands, bulging, olive toned biceps, a broad chest with a gold chain laid proudly in a nest of dark fur flecked with silver. Everywhere else his gaze drifted screamed *sex*. Will cleared his throat and directed his attention to the man’s neck. Rubbing his thumb over it, he looked from the paper to his skin; the drawing was a tribal-style wolf, snout pointed up in a wild howl. It was very masculine, unique, and fit well with the appearance Nigel presented thus far.

“This is certainly doable. We’ll need a thicker line right here to go over her legs...but yes, I can make this look good. Like it was the original piece,” he nodded confidently. What he lacked in confidence in other areas, Will did believe in his skill as an artist. It was what kept him in high demand.

Suppressing the shiver the light touch to his vulnerable neck caused, Nigel nodded as the younger man described the changes he would have to make to give Nigel the look he wanted, agreeing with them while trying very hard not to become distracted by the close proximity they sat in. Clearing his throat, Nigel tore his eyes from the lovely man leaning so temptingly close and indicated the paper Will still held. "Make the changes on the sketch so I can see them, but I think you're right about the thicker lines. How many sessions do you think, since you're covering old ink?"

Will licked his lips slowly, heart beating too fast in his chest. He really needed to get it together, but this close to Nigel he could smell the mixture of cigarettes, bourbon and some kind of musky cologne that was making him half hard, and in these jeans, he wouldn't be able to hide it. He picked up the book and set it in his lap discreetly. "Probably about four sessions. Definitely less than having it removed and this is a good cover design. If you need to think about it, I understand," he said, blue eyes meeting amber finally for a moment. God, he was intense. There was a fire there that made Will uncomfortable but curious. And definitely too hot. He was sure he was sweating, and he wiped his forehead.

Nigel couldn't help the smirk as he watched Will fidget and squirm slightly. There was no missing the interest there. But Nigel couldn't really afford to do anything about it right now and maybe not even later. He wasn't interested in just a quick fuck with the younger man and with his own future so fucking uncertain right now, he no business thinking beyond anything other than quick, one-time encounters. Besides, it wasn't wise to piss off the person you were about to let permanently mark you. Treating Will like a one night stand or one of the whores Nigel had taken to patronizing since arriving in America would not endear him to the artist. Doing the math in his head, Nigel jerked his chin in the negative.

"I don't have that kind of time, sweetheart. I need this done a whole lot fucking faster." Knocking calloused knuckles against the closed binder in his lap, Nigel gave him a challenging look. "If you're as good as you these say you are, you can do it in two sessions with the two weeks between for me to heal up." Seeing the argument forming on Will's lips, Nigel reached into his pocket and pulled out a fat roll of bills and tossed them to him. "And I don't mind paying fucking extra for the inconvenience."

Will's mouth dropped open at the money. It was a hell of a lot more than he was used to seeing, ever. He wasn't struggling that badly, but there had to be at least a couple of grand there. "It's going to hurt like a son of a bitch, doing that much work at once, and I really don't...well I don't advise it. I can't guarantee the healing between sessions but, yeah, okay," Will said, picking up the cash and staring at it. He looked back at Nigel with raised brows. "I have you booked for a two-hour session, but we'll have to go a lot longer to cut it down to two sessions. You're the last appointment today. Do you have time?" Will blinked.

Nigel smirked again, not able to help it. "I've got nothing pressing so I guess I'm all yours for tonight, gorgeous." Standing up, Nigel began unbuttoning his shirt, rolling his neck to loosen the tension Will's touch had left there. Shrugging the fabric from his shoulders, Nigel did nothing to try and conceal the scars that littered his chest and torso, letting the startled blue eyes of his audience look their fill. "As far as it hurting like a son of a bitch, as you can see, pain and I are old friends." Tossing his discarded shirt onto the back of the chair, Nigel settled back down and got comfortable. "Ready when you are, darling."

Will's mouth went dry and eyes widened as he watched Nigel reveal himself, just take off his shirt right then and there. Anyone else it wouldn't have been any big deal. But Nigel was...something else. Lean, corded sinew earned from hard work and experience, not bulky glamour muscles from a gym. A lush carpet of chest hair that Will really wanted to run his hands over, and his abs and back littered with an array of scars, bruises, and tattoos that were somehow more beautiful on this man.

Will washed his hands and began lining up the sterile tools he'd need, taking the opportunity to try and get his head together. *This is your client, paying you a lot of money. You can't be lusting after him the entire time*, he scolded himself guiltily. He finally sat back down beside Nigel and paused before putting his gloves on. "Can I get you anything before we start?" he asked, taking a deep breath. God, Nigel really did smell good.

Opening eyes he had allowed to fall shut, Nigel watched the younger man fidget. "I'm good. I'll let you know if I want a break or if I *need* anything from you, love." The blush on Will's cheeks was adorable, making it almost irresistibly tempting for Nigel to make him do it as often as possible. But the work was about to begin, so Nigel resigned himself to behaving for now. Closing his eyes again, he listened as Will slipped on his gloves and ripped open a package of gauze. Tilting his head to accommodate, Nigel hissed between his teeth at the cold of the antiseptic as Will cleaned the area he would be working on. "Cold," Nigel muttered at the curious look the sound got him, smiling ruefully at the cheeky grin the boy gave him.

Staying as still as possible, Nigel let the artist sketch out the form of his new tattoo, finding it harder than usual to remain in place. The light brushes of Will's fingers against the sensitive skin of his neck were distracting and the soft puffs of warm, moist breath made the older man want to shiver. The image of those plush, pink lips so close to his flesh flashed through Nigel's mind and wouldn't leave, sending his blood coursing south in a way that was going to become noticeable to the man leaning so close to him before too long. More distracting still, every so often, one of those oh so soft curls would brush against the edge of his jaw, tickling and tempting. This was going to be a *very* long night.

Will forced himself to steady his hands by breathing in through his nose, out through his mouth, a calming technique he employed often when his anxiety was getting the better of him. As he began, he examined Nigel closer in his periphery, and the nearly delicate beauty of his sharp cheekbones, deep-set gold eyes, flecks of amber and red in them, and those very full, sensual lips, invaded his imagination despite his best efforts. Still, he focused on the task and worked. He was terrible at small talk and hated it, but this was going to take hours.

“Your accent is...that from Eastern Europe?” He asked a bit awkwardly, his blush deepening.

Keeping his eyes shut to avoid further temptation, Nigel grunted his agreement. “Romania. Bucharest as of late.” Nigel had no idea why he was telling this near stranger the actual truth instead of the made-up story he was giving everyone else that had asked that very question, but it seemed he was. “Left in a hurry, won’t be going back for a long fucking time. If ever.” Not wanting to talk about his home or Gabi or anything related to the two, Nigel asked his own question. “What about you, little man? You from here or an import like me?” Fuck, Nigel hated small talk, he sucked at it. *You from around here?* Fucking stupid. So much easier to just demand and take and shoot when people didn’t cooperate.

Will turned away for a moment just to get another tool, but closed his eyes and let the simmering energy from Nigel inside. The scars, the tattoos, the accent, and now what little glimpse of a backstory he offered...this was a bad, bad man. Probably a criminal if he was on the run. Undoubtedly drugs, likely he’d murdered, and to have that much cash on him, it all made sense. These thoughts terrified and thrilled Will. All that power in his hands. He turned back to Nigel with a shy smile of his own. Right there, beneath his fingertips, just beside that dancing girl he’d be working on, throbbed his life force. Will swallowed his arousal and shook his head, curls falling across his forehead as he took another calming breath. “Born and raised on the bayou, I’m afraid. My whole life. Playing with gators, fishin, fixing boat motors. Wish I had an exciting backstory, but nope,” he drawled, his southern twang coming out a little thicker as he relaxed.

Nigel hummed, letting the soft cadence of Will’s voice wash over him, relishing the rolling drawl that was creeping into the syllables as the younger man relaxed. “So tell me, darling, how did a sweet little country boy end up slinging ink instead of working as a mechanic or running wild through the swamps? Has to be some kind of a story there, not just anyone can pick up a fucking gun and create art.” Nigel wanted Will to keep talking, enjoyed the sound of his voice and the soft humor in it.

“Guess I rebelled. Dad owned a boat repair shop, though he was...well, he didn’t do a great job running the place. I was an artist. It was my passion. He didn’t care for that, didn’t want me doing it so...I left,” Will shrugged. “My buddy’s cousin owned this place, but she took off and sold it to me. Made sense seeing as how I’ve worked here since I was sixteen. So it’s my place and well, I love what I do,” he said, finishing with a flutter of his lashes up at Nigel’s eyes.

“Passionate and rebellious. That I can fucking imagine.” Nigel grinned, taking in the fluttering lashes and faint blush. “I bet you were a handful. And now you have your own place and are a man of the world, eh?” Looking around at the shop, Nigel asked, “But what are you going to do about replacing that twat that took off on you? Can’t fucking do it all on your own, can you?”

Will laughing softly through his nostrils. He was really starting to like Nigel. The abrasive honesty might be a bit much for some people, but Will welcomed it. He’d rather people be blunt and upfront than the usual games most people played. “Nah, I reckon I can’t. I’ll have to put out an ad I s’pose, look around for talent. In the meantime, some of his clients have canceled, I’m picking up some, a few others are being picked up by my other artists. We’ll have to figure something out.” He looked at the image and back at Nigel’s neck, comparing the changes he’d made to the drawing. “Take a look at it. If this looks good, I’ll make the stencil and get started,” he said. He leaned in close, too close, looking over his shoulder as he held it in front of him.

Nigel allowed the proximity, recklessly leaning in a bit himself to increase it. This boy was going to be all kinds of trouble, Nigel just knew it. Wasn’t going to stop him from doing something stupid though. “I haven’t worked in the business in years, but if you need a hand short term...” Nigel let his words drift off. Apparently something *damned* stupid. Nigel felt himself flush with embarrassment. “Ah, fucking just forget I said anything.”

Will raised his eyebrows and tilted his head, leaning back for a moment in surprise. “You know how to tattoo? You’re an artist? Well, fuck me,” he muttered, sliding back, and he got up all together and pulled off his gloves to get a bottle of water from a mini-fridge. “Beer? It’s fine as long as you don’t have more than one, really,” he asked.

Nigel snorted. “It’ll take more than that to impair me. Hand it over.” Reaching out, Nigel took the offered can and cracked it open. “And yeah, I used to do a little ink on the side. Nothing formal or anything, but I never fucked up anyone’s skin and they always seemed happy with what I gave them.” Pulling out his phone, Nigel scrolled through his pics until he found one of Darko without his shirt. Blowing up the image until it only showed the man’s

back, Nigel handed it to Will. “It’s a bit faded, haven’t had a chance to touch it up for him in years, but that’s one of mine. The work on his back I mean. Not that fucking shit on his shoulder.” Nigel was proud of the blood-drenched eagle that covered two-thirds of his best friend’s back. It had been one of his first, and Nigel had added to it off and on over the years until it covered the other man’s back almost entirely.

Will took a closer look and couldn’t conceal how impressed he was. There was intricate detail, an eye for shading and color, and a unique style he hadn’t seen before. “This is very advanced. You’re incredible. You’d really be interested in working for me?” Nodding at the wad of cash on the counter he squinted and cracked a smirk. “Doesn’t seem like you’re hurting for money.”

“I’m not, but I get fucking bored and that’s *not* a good thing, fucking trust me. Besides, I miss doing the work. Don’t know how we’ll get around the certification and paperwork and shit, though.” Nigel took a long pull on his drink and sat back in the chair again. “But if you can manage it, sure I’ll be happy to work *under* you, darling...” Nigel let the innuendo hang in the air before he laughed, enjoying the way the younger man blushed for him.

Will blushed furiously and was frustrated with himself that he’d let the man get the better of him so easily. What was he, some horny teenager that he was already sweaty-palmed over a few flirtatious remarks? “Well, as long as you don’t quit without notice, you’ll already be doing better than Matthew did. When we finish up today, I’ll send you home with some paperwork and a schedule. So, does the drawing look good?” he asked again.

Nigel studied the minute changes made to the original, noting that while the overall concept of the wolf had not been altered, there were now subtle thickening of the slashing lines that formed the creature’s neck, thickening it to allow better coverage of the existing tattoo while still managing to blend and flow with the rest of the work. It added a bulk that was pleasing, subtle power to an already bold beast. Subtle like Will, accenting Nigel’s power. A partnership in ink that Nigel hoped might extend to the real world.

“It’s fucking perfect, darling.”

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Running the hand not holding his drink through his hair, Nigel wondered for the hundredth time that night just what the fuck it was he was contemplating. The papers Will has handed to him after their six-hour session lay next to him on the bed he was propped up on, folded and slightly crumpled from having been stuffed carelessly in a back pocket.

The certification and other required documents would be easy enough to get; the man responsible for Nigel's new identity and background would have little trouble with embellishing upon what he had already created for the Romanian given the right monetary incentive. And the work, that would come back to him easy enough as most of the things he was passionate about did even if he left off of them for years. No, the paperwork and the tattooing weren't the problems here. Nigel's damned emotions were the fucking problem, as per fucking usual. His own innate, obsessive and addictive personality that made Nigel his own special brand of fucked up had come into play the moment he laid eyes on Will fucking Graham.

The six hours spent in close proximity with the object of his obsession hadn't helped in the slightest. The feel of the younger man's hands on his skin, even through the thin barrier of the gloves had driven Nigel to distraction as had the soft, moist puffs of Will's breath. With his head bent to his work for most of the evening, Nigel had only been granted occasional glimpses of those stunning blue eyes, but when he did, it was captivating. Lost in the spell of creating his art, Will was absolutely beautiful and Nigel knew then it was far too late to pull away.

To put it succinctly, he was well and truly fucked.

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It was too hot in Will's bedroom above the shop, and he sat up in bed and pulled off his thin tee shirt. He got up to walk to the bathroom sink and splash cold water on his face and under his armpits; it evaporated on the way back to bed.

Will was used to the heat of course, but he couldn't sleep for another reason. Someone on his mind. Nigel. His new hire, and the man he'd spent six long hours over, working on that cover up tat. Leaning on his hard chest, having to breathe in the same space, focused on that olive skin, eyes wandering over exotic cheekbones, severe features that looked more delicate and handsome as the hours clicked by. His scent had gotten into his nose, that mix of cigarettes and whiskey and manliness, something amber and sandalwood and musk, probably an

aftershave or something. All he knew was the way Nigel looked at him made him hard, those thick, curved words that curled through the air like tendrils of smoke, everything so sensual without being crass. Every time he'd stood, he'd felt his eyes all over his body. Will certainly had his share of flirty customers, though he never really appreciated or saw what others did in himself. But Nigel made him feel, for the first time in a long time, like reciprocating.

Will sat on the edge of the bed for a minute before finally pulling off his little white briefs. Fuck it. He was alone anyway.

Crawling back in bed, he lay on top of his sheets, the fan on the nightstand pushing warm night air around from the open window. He reached down between his legs and pulled his heavy balls up, letting them rest on thick, muscular thighs. A runner in high school, he'd managed to keep his physique even though he only jogged a few times a week these days, when he had time, usually late at night.

The brief contact of his long fingers brushing against his shaft woke things up, and his cock twitched. Will sighed, restlessly closing his eyes, and there was that face smirking up at him. Nigel. Honey gold eyes, virtually undressing him, full, plush lips curved upwards. His bare chest, that carpet of fur over it, hair trailing down over his belly, inside his blue jeans. It was all Will could do not to pull down his zipper and start sucking him off like a complete slut right there. Fuck if he didn't *want* to.

Before he knew it, long fingers were wrapped around his cut cock, and he was stroking up and down. His legs were spread, toes pointed at either corner of the bed, head tossed back as he bit his lower lip. Thumbing over the slit, he spread clear, sticky pre-come over the top, and sighed, rolling his furry balls with his free hand. They were big and full, and he wondered how he'd gone that entire session without betraying how horny he'd been. Or maybe the man knew.

He knew Nigel had been eyeing him but did he actually want to do anything with him? Will had a hard time believing anyone did, really. He got the feeling Nigel was a flirty kind of guy who perhaps did that with everyone. After all, he wanted the job. But Will needed the help, so it worked out, though he was going to have to get his shit together and stop acting like a schoolgirl around the guy if he was supposed to be his boss.

For now, though, he could get lost in his fantasy. He spit in his palm to get it nice and wet and began pumping his hot flesh harder and faster, skin slapping on skin, and his back began to

arch up off the bed as he climaxed. His eyes opened as did his lips in a wordless cry as he came, spilling over his belly and up his smooth bare chest. *"Fuck....!"*

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Three days later, Nigel stood outside The Lure's door, finishing his smoke and still telling himself what a bad idea this was. With a muttered curse, he crushed the cigarette's cherry between calloused fingers and flicked the butt into the street before rapping hard on the door once and going in. Seeing no one in the front or behind the service counter, Nigel called out, his voice rough and loud in the quiet.

"Hey gorgeous, where the fuck are you? I drug my carcass out of bed this early to be stood up." Leaning back against the counter after tossing the required paperwork down, Nigel tried not to grumble with impatience. While it would be better for all concerned if the kid had changed his mind about hiring him, Nigel couldn't help the way the thought of Will rejecting him in any capacity made something ugly and deadly rear up inside him.

Will could hear someone knocking on the door of the shop from upstairs, though they weren't open yet for another hour, so he ignored it. Until he heard that familiar, raspy voice float through the open window of the second floor flat.

Shit! Nigel was here.

"Just a minute," he yelled down, pulling on a pair of jeans over his still-wet-from the shower-legs. He grabbed a tee shirt and ran barefoot down the stairs, carrying his shoes under his arm, shaking his damp curls and trying to finger dry them as best he could. Yeah, this was a great look.

Fumbling with the keys, tee shirt slung over his shoulder, he unlocked the inner door and swung it open. "Apologies. Good morning, Nigel. You're early?" he said, turning to flick on a couple of lights and shake his hair once more before pulling the tee shirt over his head.

Pushing off the counter, Nigel had to consciously stop himself for reaching for the younger man. Like some kind of a water nymph, curls wet and clinging to his skin along with a t-shirt

that stuck tight to his damp skin, Will looked like a wet dream come to life and Nigel wasn't a man used to denying himself what he wanted. He found he didn't care much for the sensation. "Jesus fucking Christ, it's like your asking for it, darling. Do you not have any survival instincts at all?" There was no way to disguise the lust in his gaze and Nigel's jeans were suddenly much tighter than when he had put them on this morning.

Will froze mid-reach and turned towards Nigel, blushing furiously up to the tips of his ears. Everything was suddenly far too hot again. "Asking for...what?" he said, trying to keep his voice steady, furrowing his brow. "Want coffee?" he said, his voice going up in pitch far higher than he would've liked.

Rubbing both hands over his face in an attempt to reel himself back in, Nigel bit back noises of frustration. "Nothing, just...fucking nothing. Yeah, coffee sounds good and you can look this shit over and make sure that's all you need for the legal stuff." Thrusting the papers in Will's hands, Nigel did his level best to stop leering at the younger man only to quickly give it up as a bad job when Will turned to lead him into the back and presented Nigel with a great view of his damp jeans clinging to the lush globes of his ass. Inwardly groaning, the Romanian started making bets with himself about how long he would be able to hold out. Not liking the odds, he gave it a week at most before he gave in and bent his new boss over the most convenient flat surface and fucked him silly.

Will took the papers and walked to a small kitchen area, pulling down two mugs. He popped a French roast pod into the coffee maker and added water, punching a few buttons, and soon the machine was spitting out delicious hot life-giving fluid. While they waited, Will toed on his shoes and once they were on, he started looking over the paperwork. "It seems all in order. I'm uhm...I'll need to sit with you for your first client if you don't mind, just to watch you work. It's nothing to be offended by, more I just want to see your style really. Pretty customary for new artists." He leaned against the counter and looked Nigel over, trying hard to push the images he'd had from the night before away.

"No worries, love. I'd be worried if you didn't want to keep an eye on me at first. God, that smells fucking wonderful." Concentrating on the heavenly smells coming from the coffee pot, Nigel couldn't help but warm to the lingering looks the younger man was sending not so subtly his way. On one hand, it was wonderful to know he was not the only one affected by the chemistry between them, but on the other, it only encouraged Nigel's greedy want of the man standing less than a foot from him. And there was an awfully lot of tempting counter space in the kitchen which looked to be the perfect height for fucking Will over.

When the machine was done with the first cup, Will popped the old pod out and handed the steaming mug to him. "Cream, sugar, all that is in the tray there," he gestured, biting his lip unintentionally when he touched Nigel's hand. Trying to act cool, he went back to the coffee drawer and pulled out another pod for himself and tossed it in the air playfully, but only succeeded in dropping it. The plastic piece went skittering across the smooth linoleum, and he could feel his face heating up. "Shit," he muttered, walking over and bending down to pick it up.

There wasn't much recovery to be had from that, and he inwardly kicked himself as he started the machine up again. "Didn't sleep so good last night I guess," he grumbled, rubbing his eyes.

Nigel laughed softly to cover the little groan that wanted out when Will innocently bent over giving the older man another unobstructed view of just how lovingly the faded denim of Will's jeans cupped his ass. As if Nigel needed reminding. The boy had no survival instincts. At. All. "And why would that be, darling? I thought all angels slept sweetly." And apparently, neither did Nigel, spouting cheesy one-liners like an idiot. The crap that just kept coming out of his mouth... *JesusFuckingChrist!!!* Next, he'd be asking the kid if he wanted to go out for a coffee like some fucking prat... Oh Hell, scratch that, they were having coffee now, weren't they? Nigel was so fucked.

Will started to snort but caught himself when he felt a wave of embarrassment roll off the other man and slam into him. He only needed to glance up and see the way the other man looked down, a crooked smirk on his face, those alpine cheekbones darkened with what he would dare say was a blush, and he knew it was a sincere attempt at flirtation. It was Will's turn to be surprised, but he felt almost giddy at the idea. "I'm hardly an angel, but ah, thanks," he said, laughing in a rough voice to ease the tension. "In any case, if I were, I would say they don't sleep too good every night then, no. Somebody told me I shouldn't drink so much before bed, but that sounds just damn stupid to me," he said with a shy smile at Nigel.

Nigel grunted, grimacing as the hot liquid in his mug burned his mouth, instantly regretting the large gulp he had taken to cover his embarrassment. "In my experience, people, in general, are too fucking quick to offer their opinions on all sorts of things that aren't any of their fucking business. And most of their advice is shit, so I say do what the fuck you want if it works for you." The shy smile the boy wore was not helping Nigel focus on much more than what that lovely mouth would look like wrapped around his dick. Giving himself a mental shake, he cleared his throat and tried to bring the conversation back to why he was actually there. "So, what have you got lined up for me first today, angel? Anything already booked or you putting me on walk-ins?"

Will couldn't help but stare at the bulge of tanned bicep straining at the short shirt sleeve as his gaze wandered down the muscular arms that folded over his chest, and he found himself swallowing down a blush all over again. "There's a girl coming in a bit later this afternoon that didn't have a preference as to who of us she'd have, so I figured if you'd like, you could take her. Other than that, I was going to just have you take walk-ins today. Start slow and easy, ya know?" He doctored up his own coffee when it was done, adding cream to it and sugar as well.

"Alright, sounds like a plan. You can babysit me through the first one so you know I'm not going to butcher the job and then we'll play it by ear." Smiling crookedly and wondering what in the hell the boy was blushing about now, Nigel's voice was soft, "I even promise to try very fucking hard not to curse too much and tell the customers that they're idiots when they ask for something stupid like their lover's name or cutesy little hearts and shit. How does that sound, gorgeous?"

Will chuckled and ran a hand through his messy curls, blue eyes finally meeting amber. "Sounds good." In honesty part of him already trusted this rough around the edges man. His instincts always told him right away if someone was off. But he couldn't tell him that yet. He took a sip of coffee and grinned at him.

Nigel let his answering grin linger even as he reminded himself once again how bad an idea this was. Fuck it anyway, it was already far too late for second thoughts.

"Perfect, darling. Let's get this thing started then, shall we?"

The Nibble

Chapter Summary

Nigel was tired of one night stands and the brief, unsatisfying encounters with the prostitutes he picked up when the idea of being alone got to be too much. He wanted what he thought he had found with Gabbi. And he wanted it with this beautiful, awkward, fascinating man. He had known Will for such a short amount of time, but it didn't seem to matter to his black and twisted soul.

Or, Nigel gets creative and Will, well Will finally gets a clue.

Chapter Notes

Hi! Been gone a minute but we're back! Hope you enjoy and remember, kudos and comments feed the muses!

We don't own the boys, but damn, don't we wish it was so!

Nigel could be *very* charming when he wanted to be. Hence why he was currently smiling winningly at the pretty young airhead sitting in his chair instead of cutting off her high pitched, giggling voice by wrapping his hands around her anorexic neck the way he so badly wanted to. But a promise was a promise, so instead, he sat patiently through yet another rendition of how much 'Amber' and her soulmate Brad (she'd known the twat for all of two weeks, mind you) were in love and how they were destined to be together, so of course it would be the most romantic thing in the world to have her lover's name tattooed above her heart, right?

Nigel smothered a snort of irritation, resisting the urge to strangle the girl once again and kept the smile plastered firmly on his face. It was an unfortunate fact that people like Amber were a tattoo shop's bread and butter. She would pay for the ink and then, after the flames of passion inevitably fizzled out, she would be back to have it covered up. Nigel gave it three months at the most. Nigel *knew* this as well as he knew his own face, but the longer she sat there, all naivety and just so damned *young*, the more reluctant Nigel felt about allowing the girl to make such a *stupid* mistake. But he couldn't exactly try and talk her out of it with his new boss sitting the next station over, now could he?

When the gushing Amber paused to take a much-needed breath, Nigel broke in smoothly, voice pitched to play up his accent as he had found it had a *very* positive effect on women in this country. “Amber, darling, I can see how much you love Brad, and he’s damned lucky to have such a fine woman,” here Nigel let his eyes run flirtatiously over her, winking as she blushed, “but if you’re open to suggestions, I think we can do a hell of a lot better than just his name,” Waving his hand dismissively, Nigel made a disdainful face, playing it up a bit, but if that was what it was going to take, he’d lay it on as thick as he could. “Everyone does that, tons of tramps, uh, girls out there with guys names tatted on their skins. Shouldn’t your tattoo be as special and unique as your love for Brad?”

Amber’s eyes had widened a bit when he started waving his hand about, but she was practically cooing over that last bit of his speech. “Oooohhhh, that is soooo sweet!!!” Her tone was high pitched enough to make Nigel grit his teeth, but at least he had her attention. She reached out and grabbed his hand, squeezing it and staring up at him in a way that made Nigel re-evaluate the shelf-life of dear old Brad and gushed, “You’re so intuitive, I can tell! What do you think I should get? I’m sure whatever you suggest, I’ll love it!!!”

Discreetly pulling his hand free, Nigel gave her’s a pat and reached for his sketchbook and a pencil. Asking a series of questions, he began to draw, coloring in the design as he went depending on her answers. Twenty minutes later, he handed her the results, a deceptively simple Tigerlily, but done in shades nature never intended. Turquoise and lavender blended into edges reminiscent of sunset around curled petal tips, dotted with blacks and blues and bright yellow stamen. And cleverly hidden in and amongst the swirling colors were the two lover’s names, worked into the design so that if you didn’t know they were there, you’d miss them completely.

“The flower he put in your hair when you were on vacation in Hawaii, the colors of the sea and sunset when he first kissed you, the yellow of that bikini he loved so much. And here, your names, a secret just for the two of you.” Nigel’s fingers brushed the air just above the drawing, pointing out the details as the young girl stared down at his work. “How’s that for romantic, darling?”

He was completely unprepared when she burst into tears and threw herself into his arms, sobbing about how *perfect* it was and how *wonderful* Nigel was to have created something so *beautiful*. Patting awkwardly at her back, Nigel glanced over his shoulder at where Will sat with another customer, his face a combination of mild panic and exasperation. Raising his eyebrows for emphasis, he silently mouthed “*Help me!!!*” while trying without success to ease Amber back into her seat.

Will was watching without watching, from a safe distance, pretending to work on paperwork. Impressive. He'd seen plenty of girls like Amber come in and make the mistake of a lifetime only to have to come back and get a cover-up job, which he was of course, good at. He was amazed at the genius idea Nigel had not only come up with but executed.

He continued about his own work, and when he could see Nigel was finishing her up, he walked around to take a look at the results.

Will feigned surprise. "This is incredible. How long have you been planning this? Where'd you come up with the idea?" he asked the young woman, leaning in close to get a better look.

Sniffing delicately, Amber managed a smile as she turned to look over her shoulder at Will. "Oh, it was all Nigel! He's incredible!" She turned to beam at Nigel, one delicate hand reaching out and patting him dangerously high on his thigh and staying to linger. "Isn't it beautiful? He drew it in like, twenty minutes and just seemed to know what I wanted even when I didn't! He's sooo intuitive!" Batting eyelashes and a firm squeeze to his inner thigh had Nigel rolling his stool back hastily.

"Well a beautiful woman deserves beautiful ink on her skin," Nigel covered with a grin. "Now, let's get some ointment for that and I'll explain the aftercare and what you'll need to do to make sure it heals well."

"Oh, I'd love to hear all about your idea of aftercare, Nigel," Amber purred suggestively, making Nigel choke on air and shoot a smirking Will a dirty look while he rummaged around in the cabinet for what was needed. He was not *blushing* for Christ's sake! In a bar, Nigel would have had no problem knowing exactly how to respond to the come on, but here, with his boss looking on with a shit eating grin that Nigel just wanted to kiss from his face with extreme thoroughness, he was floundering.

Will was amused, to say the least, watching the swaggering confidence of the Romanian falter under the intense flirtations of Amber. Someone like Nigel couldn't possibly be so ill-versed in handling the advances of thirsty women, so why did he seem so flustered? Maybe it was the new job or having his boss look on. Either way, Will was feeling rather devilish about the situation.

“Nigel’s very thorough about aftercare. You know, Amber, if you have any questions, I haven’t made up business cards for Nigel yet, but let me get you his direct phone number,” Will offered, pulling out one of the shop cards and grabbing a pen. He shot a wink at Nigel and smirked. “We have a lot of repeat business and loyal customers here thanks to our hands-on service and follow through,” he added as he started to scratch out numbers on the card. He handed it to the girl and leaned back against the counter, arms folded across his chest with a smile. “And since you’re so happy, you should make sure your girlfriends know how good he is, too.”

Nigel’s eyes narrowed at the grinning Will, his gaze promising retribution. But he couldn’t help the grin trying to curve his lips in response to the younger man’s teasing, playful smile. The pup was obviously enjoying Nigel’s discomfort and the tired lines on his face relaxed just a bit. Will had been under quite a bit of stress lately and if seeing Nigel squirming a little eased that even for a little bit, Nigel was willing to play along. He’d just have to show the boy that he could give as good as he got.

Amber let out an excited squeal when Will handed her the card, clutching it in greedy hands and giggling. “Oh, my girlfriends will just *love* him to bits, thank you,” she beamed. “And Nigel was telling me how he’s new to the area, so we’ll have to get together and show him how much fun New Orleans can be!” Turning her bright smile on Nigel, she reached out and caressed his forearm. “You’d come, won’t you? It’ll be so much fun!!!” Grinning salaciously, she cooed, “I promise you’ll have a great time!”

Thinking quick on his feet, Nigel gave the young woman his best smile and all but purred, “A night out with a group of beautiful women, how could any man resist, darling?” Stepping closer, he leaned in, as if sharing a confidence, “And perhaps, since you have been so obviously successful in finding love, you can give me some advice. You see, there’s someone I like, a gorgeous creature that has completely turned my head and is making a mess of my emotions, But,” he sighed dramatically, “they don’t seem to notice I exist.”

Amber’s face went from eager anticipation to sympathetic concern in a heartbeat. “Oh, you poor thing! So they have no idea how you feel?” Her tiny hand patted in soothingly on the arm.

Nigel really poured in on now, ducking his head and letting his shoulders droop. “No. And when they bother to speak to me at all, it is only teasing and indifference. Perhaps you and your friends can help me figure out what I should do?” Nigel let Amber hug him while she promised all the help she and her girlfriends could provide, hiding a smirk in her hair while casting a glance in Will’s direction to gauge the other man’s reaction.

The brunet stared, perplexed that Nigel seemed to be eating the attention right up, and curious what he meant by this person he liked. Who the fuck was it and why was he confiding in a complete stranger? Was he making it up just to get her sympathy? Maybe it was all an act to bring in business. He'd have to ask him, somehow, later. Will collected tools and watched impassively, looking away when he caught Nigel's eye. Clearly, he'd been schooled on the art of the bluff.

He waited for Nigel to finish up with the girl. Shit, it felt weird to come out and ask what he meant. Will tidied up, fussing too much and cleaning in spite of the place not needing it, just as an excuse to linger around the older man. Well, not that much older but he seemed like it sometimes.

He was sweating, he realized and peeled off his plaid shirt down to just his thin white undershirt beneath. He dabbed his forehead with his cast off shirt and grinned sheepishly when Nigel turned and looked at him. "Sure is hot today," he blurted out awkwardly. Fuck. So stupid.

Nigel had been watching Will fuss about the shop, the younger man shooting him speculative glances when he thought Nigel wasn't looking, a perplexed look on his face that morphed into annoyance from time to time as if his thoughts displeased him. Either Will was truly oblivious or he was trying to find a way to let Nigel down easy and turning himself inside out with the effort. Nigel sighed, throwing the towel he had been using to clean his station into the bin and flopping down into the chair. He grunted in response to Will's comment about the weather, cranking his head from side to side to ease some of the stiffness from his muscles. He had forgotten how much the work could leave him aching after hours bent over another person. Leaning his head back, he eyed his boss speculatively. "If there's no one else on the schedule for today, why don't you grab us a couple of beers from the fridge and you can tell me what the fuck's bothering you."

"Well, the beer sounds good," Will murmured with raised eyebrows, avoiding eye contact. No one else was coming in, so they could close up. He sauntered to the door, flipped the sign over and locked up, and turning out the lights at the front of the shop, went back where the chairs and Nigel were and got those beers. Cracking them both open on the underside of the counter, he handed one to Nigel, flipped a chair around backward and sat down.

"What makes you think anythin's bothering me?" he asked carefully, before tossing back a swig. Oh, did it feel good, icy cold, all the way down his throat. Condensation trickled from

the bottle down his fingers, chin, and neck. He didn't bother wiping it away.

Nigel took the beer handed to him, distracted from doing much more as Will drank from his own, the long, smooth muscles of the other man's throat working to swallow down the cool liquid, conjuring up the image of Will on his knees, swallowing down something much different. And the pleased sounds the boy was making were not helping Nigel's concentration. At. All.

Clearing his throat guiltily at the odd glance Will was giving him, Nigel manfully pushed the fantasy out of his head and answered. "Well, you've been eyeing me sideways since Amber left, for one thing, refusing to make eye contact completely. And for another, you fidget like fucking mad when something's on your mind. So quit beating around the bush and just spit it out, yeah?" Tipping the bottle, Nigel took a long pull and cocked a brow at Will expectantly.

Will shrugged, trying to seem casual. "Just, seemed like things went really great with that last customer. I'm impressed at your skill, which I knew you had, but creativity too. And uhh...you know...you seemed to have a pretty good rapport, too," he said. His hands were really wet now from the bottle, and he ran one through his unruly curls, slicking them back a little. "You mentioned, well, someone you...liked. Figured maybe you would wanna talk to another guy about it or somethin," he said, fidgeting restlessly.

Nigel leaned further back in the chair, rubbing his chin with the hand not holding his beer and eyed Will with a measure of disbelief. Surely the kid wasn't that fucking dense. Or maybe, Nigel paused in his thinking, *maybe* the younger man just lacked that much self-confidence in his own level of desirability. Deciding to tread carefully, Nigel made a sound of agreement.

"All right then, why the fuck not." Taking another quick gulp of his drink, Nigel stood and walked over to stand closer to Will, his gait loose, flowing and just this side of predatory. He stopped just inches from the other man, his gaze hot. "This guy, he caught my eye from the moment I laid eyes on him. Fucking gorgeous, though I don't think he realizes that about himself. Funny. Smart, too. But a bit dense on social cues. I've flirted with him but it's not getting me anywhere. I'd be a bit more blunt about it, but I'm not sure how he'd take it. Don't want to fucking scare him off, now do I?" Taking another drink, Nigel dug around in his back pocket, coming up with his soft pack and his zippo. "Mind?"

Will could feel the heat rush up his neck and over his cheeks, and he hated himself for it. His heart was pounding in his ears and beads of sweat dripped down his face. Why the fuck was he like this? Realizing Nigel was actually asking him a question, he furrowed his brows and snorted. "Hell, no. Smoked worse in here than cigarettes," he chuckled. Taking another long drink to delay having to answer, he could see the tall, broad-chested, ridiculously good looking man standing there casually, waiting on him for an answer. God damn it.

A guy. A *guy* ...

Will licked his lips slowly. "Well, do you know if this...uh...if the guy likes other guys too?" he finally choked out, his voice sounding slightly too high pitched. Had he always been this bad at conversation? Yes. Yes, he had, and that's why he kept to *himself* and was an artist. That's why he had people like Jimmy and Matthew and Margot and more outgoing folks out front to manage *people*.

Lighting up, Nigel inhaled deeply, held the smoke in until his lungs burned before exhaling through his nose, the thick smoke curling between them like a curtain. Tilting his chin towards his chest, Nigel leaned in a bit, not quite looming over the seated figure, but coming damned close to it. "Oh, I think he does. At least, he's never seemed put off by my flirting, just doesn't seem to take it seriously." Another drag, the pause heavy with tension. "And you know, that's something I don't fucking care for in the slightest. Not being taken seriously, I mean. Tends to make me...reckless in regards to the consequences. Too damned used to just taking what I want I guess," Nigel shrugged. "But I was trying to be a gentleman about the whole thing."

Will became acutely aware of how close Nigel was standing. Very close. So close, he could smell the combination of beer, cigarettes, some intoxicatingly sensual musk that he imagined had to have been driving Amber insane while he was working on her for hours, and his natural, manly sweat smell. It was arousing, and Will knew he should definitely not be thinking of his new employee that way, especially when he was opening up to him about his romantic life. He wiped the edge of his bottle over his forehead and sighed, trying to scoot his chair back a little. Maybe he'd gotten too close to Nigel without realizing it. He did tend to get absent-minded, lost in his own thoughts. "While I agree with being respectful, sometimes you have to take risks and just go for it, you know?" he said weakly, glancing up at the other man.

Bingo. Grinning wolfishly, Nigel twisted around to set his beer on a nearby counter, dropping his unfinished cigarette into the amber liquid before turning back to close the small distance Will had put between them. "Well, if that's what you think is best, darling..."

The words had barely passed his lips before he had yanked the younger man to his feet, both hands twisting into the thin material of Will's t-shirt, hauling him tight against Nigel's chest as the Romanian lowered his head and took Will's mouth with his own.

Nigel had been fantasizing about Will's mouth since laying eyes on the boy and as it turned out, his imagination had utterly failed him. Will was sweet and soft, yielding with a soft gasp of surprise that parted his lips and allowed Nigel to slip inside to taste him fully. Either frozen in shock or too startled to resist, the younger man was pliant in Nigel's arms as the older man wasted no time in taking full advantage, sweeping into the hot cavern of Will's mouth, running his seeking tongue over teeth and gums, teasing along the slick surface and daring the warm muscle to twine with his own.

Will only had enough time to make a soft gasp when he'd been hauled up and into the strong arms of the bigger man. All his muscles tensed at first, but once Nigel's tongue was in his mouth, all bets were off. He relaxed into it, fingers curling into his shirt, palms pressed against his chest in an initial effort of defense that had rapidly melted into surrender.

Remembering himself, he found his legs under his body and struggled for a moment finally, pushing Nigel back. Panting and face flushed, lips swollen, he blinked big wet eyes at the other man in shock. "W-w-what was that?!" he exclaimed. His tee shirt clung to his frame from sweat, and he ran his hand down his body to compose himself, a mixture of arousal and embarrassment on his face.

Allowing the younger man to escape, for now, Nigel grinned, running a hand through his own hair. "That, darling, was me being blunt. But if you have to ask, I guess I could try harder. Why don't you come back over here and let's try again? I'm sure with a little more effort, I'll be able to get through to you." Eyes greedy and voice a low rumble, Nigel coaxed, "Come here, *ibuitel*, come let me hold you." Nigel reached for him again, intending to take up where they had left off. One kiss was definitely not going to be enough. Not by a fucking long shot.

Will leaned breathlessly against the counter. "A-are you serious? Me? But I'm...You're...you could have that young girl, anyone. Why the hell me?" he stammered. He was truly dumbfounded, believing himself to simply be a socially awkward and somewhat rumped, frumpy-looking backwoods country boy. Certainly not someone that a tall, blonde, exotic looking man like Nigel would ever be interested in. He saw the way that woman was all over him, surely it was that way everywhere he went.

Nigel frowned, dropping his arms back to his sides, a considering look on his face as he let the younger man have the room he so obviously needed. Will's reaction was not at all what he was expecting and it cooled his lust into something softer. "You really don't see it, do you?" Shaking his head at Will's puzzled look, Nigel laughed softly. "I've had girls like that. Dozens of them. And if all I was after was a quick fuck, I'd have taken her up on it, no problem. But that's not what I'm after, not here. Not now."

And somehow, the words were true. Nigel was tired of one night stands and the brief, unsatisfying encounters with the prostitutes he picked up when the idea of being alone got to be too much. He wanted what he thought he had found with Gabbi. And he wanted it with this beautiful, awkward, fascinating man. He had known Will for such a short amount of time, but it didn't seem to matter to his black and twisted soul.

Will softened his stance and dropped his shoulders, daring to approach Nigel. There was something in his eyes, like he dropped his guard, the rough around the edges, tough act that he normally had. A bit like when he spoke to that girl about the person he was interested in. Vulnerability. "What is it you're after, then?" he asked quietly, his voice deeper.

Golden eyes searched Will's, the openness Nigel finding there the only thing keeping the older man from slamming his own walls back up in self-defense. The unexpected moment of vulnerability left him feeling raw and on edge. *What was he after?* Swallowing hard, Nigel decided to take a chance, hoping like hell it wouldn't come back to bite him somewhere soft and vulnerable.

"I don't fucking know, not exactly." Dropping his gaze, he shook his head as if confused by his own words. "Something..." A pause and then the words were coming out in a rush, a whispered confession from a man who had much to confess. "Something that I once had a taste of, that was beautiful and good before it all went to shit." Looking up, Nigel met Will's gaze and held it, his eyes tired, but still proud and refusing to flinch or hide. "I'm tired of being alone, *ibuitel*. I want something *real*, just once, before I die."

Will didn't let people in like this. His empathy...it was usually too much, and he kept walls up, tall brick ones that no one ever tried to get over. People would get only so far and give up, write him off as a quiet weirdo, maybe a good-looking guy but ultimately not worth the trouble.

It was different with Nigel, but he didn't know why. The emotions rolling off the man hit him like a wave, and he knew he meant every word; more than that, he felt the longing and loneliness and hope in his words.

He walked closer and touched Nigel's hand. "I...I don't know what to say. No one's ever said anything like this to me before. I'm...I'm guarded, I think we're probably more alike than we realize, actually," he chuckled, a rough sound from deep in his throat. "Maybe..." he began and then leaned in to return Nigel's kiss, his cheeks a deep crimson blush.

Nigel's arms came up automatically, holding Will carefully, afraid of scaring the younger man away with how badly he wanted to crush that smaller frame against his own and just cling. "Maybe is better than an outright fuck off I suppose," he chuckled. "You'll be needing to take this slow, yeah?" And that would be just fine with Nigel. His relationship with Gabbi had been a whirlwind affair, very little time spent between them that hadn't been in bed and perhaps that's where things had gone wrong. Perhaps Nigel's obsessive need to possess and consume all her love at once had doomed them from the beginning. He would try not to make the same mistakes here. "Shall we try dating then, darling?"

Will allowed his weight to sag a little in Nigel's arms, his long fingers curling into a bicep. God, he was strong, sturdy, and he could understand fully how Amber swooned in his presence as she had. The size difference between the two men felt all the more real when he was in his grasp like this, and Will shivered, goosebumps forming on his arms. Blushing to the roots of his curls, he gave a shy, lopsided smile up to the Romanian. "Yeah, I think so," he said, his southern drawl coming out a bit more.

Chuckling at the bright red color spreading across the younger man's face, Nigel pressed an affectionate kiss into the soft curls tickling his nose as Will snuggled close. Maybe, just maybe, fate would be on his side this time and things wouldn't end in blood and tears.

Maybe.

One On The Hook

Chapter Summary

5 am for our date, don't forget. I'm picking you up, right?

Nigel stared down at the text on his phone, part of him truly hoping he wasn't reading it correctly. He blinked a few times, rubbed his eyes for good measure, but no. The phone was still lit up with Will's message, and it still read 5 fucking a.m.

"Well fuck me..." he groaned unhappily

Chapter Notes

Hi everyone (those of you still reading this fic) sorry it's been so long! We have no excuse except life can be challenging and depression makes it more so. Unfortunately for you, dear readers, both authors suffer from occasional bouts and rarely at the same time so delays are inevitable. But we won't abandon our fics, so if you can tolerate the wait between chapters, we promise to get you there.

As always, we don't own it. We just decided to take it for a boat ride! I edited per the norm, so yeah, the blame is mine.

Love and Hugs,

CS and Alone

Will couldn't even remember the last time he'd actually taken anyone on a date before.

Well, ...that wasn't completely true. There were a few blind dates Margot had tried setting him up on, all of which failed miserably. He wasn't shy, but he *was* awkward, which often came out in the form of blurting out painfully honest observations. It wasn't always entirely welcome, particularly when he could be so spot-on sometimes with the way he saw through some people. And if it wasn't that turning people off, it was his often salty demeanor and biting sarcasm, two things he had a hard time shutting off. He was often told he had a bad case of RBF -*resting bitch face* - and he never did feel terribly compelled to change just to make anyone more comfortable.

None of it was Margot's fault, it wasn't even his dates' fault. Will was just...unique.

Honestly, if Nigel hadn't been so forward with him, he'd never have thought a man like that was attracted to him. They were so opposite. He was just a country boy, Louisiana born and bred, more at home deep in the swamps working on boat motors, fishing, and drawing. Nigel was a European tough guy, clearly from the city, suave, smooth-talking, sexy.

But there was that saying, opposites attract.

Will decided he wanted to introduce Nigel to a different side of New Orleans. The man was clearly used to sticking to Bourbon street, the bars, the speakeasies, the strip clubs. For their date, he settled on an activity where he'd be more in his *own* comfort zone.

He wore simple shorts and a tee-shirt and had his pickup truck packed up with supplies. He sent a text off as he sat in his living room above The Lure.

5 am for our date, don't forget. I'm picking you up, right?

Nigel stared down at the text on his phone, part of him truly hoping he wasn't reading it correctly. He blinked a few times, rubbed his eyes for good measure, but no. The phone was still lit up with Will's message, and it still read 5 fucking a.m.

"Well fuck me..." he groaned unhappily, eyes closing (as if that would change the time Will had decided on), and let his head fall back to rest against the couch cushion. Now, Nigel knew that some people got up at that kind of ungodly hour, he just couldn't understand why anyone would do so *voluntarily*. He certainly never imagined *he* would be doing so. Nigel was a night owl by nature, rarely rising before ten or eleven, and rarely fully functional before noon. Even beginning work at the tattoo parlor had failed to alter that to any real extreme. After witnessing the useless zombie that was Nigel in the mornings just once, Will now rarely scheduled Nigel's first client earlier than one. And now this...

In the aftermath of their first kiss and in a cloud of amorous affection, Nigel had offered to let Will decide on their activities for their first official ‘date’, and it seemed the wicked boy was going to use Nigel's rare generosity to torture the older man. With a huff, Nigel squinted at the screen again, seeing the little blinking dash prompting him to answer. There was nothing for it but to give in gracefully.

“How could I forget, darling? I’ve been looking forward to it all week. And yes, if you’re dragging me OUT of bed at that hour, you’re definitely fucking driving.”

Adding a couple of smiling emojis to let the younger man know he was teasing (sort of), Nigel contemplated asking once more where Will was planning on taking them before dropping the phone on the cushion beside him and reaching for his beer instead. Will had refused to even give him a clue, stating that it was a surprise and all Nigel needed to do was wear something cool and comfortable.

He couldn’t help but feel as excited as a kid. Will made quick work of getting ready for the day, even packing a lunch and getting a couple of thermoses of coffee ready for them. He knew it was probably earlier than the man was used to, given how he’d asked to have clients booked only after noon and was more of a night owl, but it was personally Will’s favorite time of day.

The sun was barely peeking over the horizon when he jogged up the stairs to Nigel’s flat and knocked on the door, a thermos of coffee in hand to give his new...boyfriend.

Hair still wet from his shower and clad only in his boxer briefs, Nigel was halfway through shaving, eyes blurry and a cigarette hanging from between his lips when Will knocked on his door, making the half-awake ex-gangster jump at the noise and the razor to slip. Cursing as a thin line of blood beaded up and began running from the new cut on his jaw down his neck, Nigel went to answer the door, forgetting his half undressed state. Checking the peephole out of habit, he opened the door to glower at a much too energized looking Will. “I cannot fucking believe I let you talk me into getting up at this god awful fucking hour. You owe me big time, gorgeous.”

Will was in no way expecting to be greeted by a more than half-naked Romanian, and his mouth dropped open in shock, eyes dilating slowly as he stood in the doorway holding the

container of coffee. It was all he could do not to drop it.

“Wa-wow,” he drawled dumbly, looking the man up and down. Sure, he’d seen Nigel shirtless. That had been enough. This was too much. His face felt like it was a thousand degrees. He was sweating. Actually *sweating*. “Mornin’,” he finally said, stumbling inside, the front of his khaki cargo shorts feeling a bit fuller. Fuck.

Shutting the door, Nigel grunted skeptically at the questionable greeting and made his way back towards the bathroom, wiping at the blood and remaining shaving cream on his face with the ends of the towel slung around his neck. “If that’s coffee in your thermos, I just might start to forgive you, darling. Pour me a cup and I’ll even consider letting you kiss me. Then, *maybe*, it’ll be a good fucking morning.” Finished with the towel and tossing into the hamper, Nigel turned to face the younger man. Will had followed him and now stood hovering in the bathroom doorway, still silent. Still staring. Nigel smirked, took the cigarette from his lips after a long drag and blew a cloud of smoke towards the ceiling as he leaned back against the vanity, letting Will look his fill.

Will bit his lower lip, his gaze lingering on Nigel’s belly and the dark trail from his navel to the top of his boxers. “Coffee...right...yes, I made coffee,” he mumbled and managed to unscrew the lid and pour a cup. Fucking good thing he took it black or Will was sure he’d scald himself trying to prepare it.

Reaching out with the hand holding his smoke, Nigel took the offered cup while simultaneously wrapping his free hand around Will’s waist to pull him close. Tugging until he had the smaller man situated to his liking, namely nestled between Nigel’s slightly spread thighs and tucked against his bare chest, Nigel nuzzled the soft curls before taking a large gulp from the steaming cup and swallowing it down, humming blissfully. If one had to be up practically before the sun, this was the only way Nigel could imagine doing it. Only one thing could make it better, and with a tug to tilt the boy’s face up to his own, Nigel set that to rights as well, fitting his lips to Will’s in a gentle, sipping kiss that was as undemanding as it was sweet.

Someone between Will’s legs seemed especially eager and glad to be up at such an early hour, and yes, that was his cock that had slipped down the leg of his sport mesh briefs and was rapidly filling with blood. His fingers curled against the bare chest then opened and spread, the flat of his palm surrendering, and his head tilted to allow for a deepening of Nigel’s kiss. He hummed in response, tongue lazily slipping over the other man’s in a low moan.

“...hmmm...it’s a good morning now,” he said against Nigel’s lips a little breathlessly, cheeks already far too red for five am.

Nigel hummed his agreement, sipping from his cup again as he just took a moment to enjoy Will’s presence, his slight but solid weight against Nigel’s body and the clean, sweet scent that was uniquely Will. “Since I’m guessing you want to be going sooner rather than later, darling, we had best stop now or the only place we’ll manage to make it to is my bed.” One more peck on the lips and Nigel nudged the younger man back a bit, grinning at the telling bulge in the wee little shorts Will was wearing. “I have no fucking clue as to what to wear for whatever adventure you’ve got planned so how about you go pick something out, love.”

Will licked his lips, tasting Nigel there with a heavy sigh. He chuckled and looked down, curls scattering across his forehead at the shy deflection. He could feel how red his face must be, and he huffed a little in mock offense. “I don’t know ‘bout you, but I came to take you out on a good authentic bayou date. Comfort is what you’ll want, something you don’t mind getting a little dirty that’s nice, loose and cool,” he said, trying to avoid the sight and scent of the incredibly sexy man. Fuck, he could still feel his lips and the weight of his body against him.

He walked further into Nigel’s place, peeking curiously down the hall. “Shorts, tee-shirt, maybe an extra set of clothes just in case. I keep a dry bag for the extra stuff, you can put them in there.” He grinned crookedly at the blond then, cheeks darkening once more.

Nigel followed Will back down the hall, admiring the plush curve of the younger man’s ass as he went. “Bedroom’s second on the right,” he said absently, mulling over what Will had said and wondered out loud what might constitute an ‘authentic bayou date’. When all he received in answer was another cheeky grin, he grunted and went over to his dresser, rooting around until he came up with a pair of tan cargo shorts and a white tank top. “Look in the closet and grab me a shirt to put over this, darling. Don’t much care which one, you pick.”

Will shrugged and opened the closet, and gasped when his eyes landed on one specific pattern. “Cohhh!” he exclaimed. “What’s this? I think I found it,” he said and turned around, a shit-eating, lopsided grin on his face as he held out a breezy looking blue, short-sleeved shirt, little orange dachshunds scattered all across it. He sauntered up to Nigel and coolly pressed it to his chest, one eyebrow arched. “Mmm-mmm. Fish’ll be biting somethin’ fierce when they see this.”

“Do you say so, darling?” Nigel murmured, grinning down at Will’s upturned and slightly smug face. The shirt in question had started out as a gag, something Nigel had bought and worn to aggravate his business partner Darko, (which had worked better than even Nigel could have hoped for), and afterward had become one of Nigel’s favorite casual shirts. Taking the shirt and slipping it on, Nigel tugged Will closer and leaned in to whisper in the boy’s ear, “And if I’m a truly lucky man, it won’t just be the fucking fish nibbling by the end of the day, yeah?”

The brunet should’ve known his comment would be met with at least as much if not more seduction than anything Will could dole out, but he’d tried. That hot breath on his ear and the suggestion Nigel made left Will breathless, and his attempt to chuckle came out as a cough.

“If you’re uh, ready then, we should head up. I packed us a lunch, plenty of water and a cooler full of beers too. Got a boat for us, I still keep one docked at one of my Dad’s old places. Gonna go fishing, as I alluded to a moment ago. You ever been?” he asked. His cheeks were already dark enough, and he was anxious to move from the close quarters of the bedroom, if they were going to get out of there in any reasonable time frame, that is.

Letting the blushing younger man pull away, Nigel hummed thoughtfully, scratching his chin as he tried to remember. “Once or twice, maybe. But not for years and only from the docks.” He didn’t mention that one time he and Darko had ended up having to fish one of their shipments out of the ocean when things had gone tits up on a smuggling run. He didn’t think Will would count that as ‘fishing’. Snagging his sunglasses off the top of his dresser, Nigel led the way out of his bedroom and back out into the living room. “I take it this isn’t going to be like that.”

“We’re going further out than the docks. Better, bigger fish out yon. We’ll be eating good tonight. Come on,” Will assured him with an enthusiastic grin and turned to head out the door to his truck.

“Well, this should be fucking interesting...” Nigel muttered, following out into the soft dawn light.

Will didn't need coffee to be energized for the day's activities. He remembered when he was a small boy, the first time his father let him come along with him fishing, and this was a very similar feeling. Even though Nigel had said he'd been before, Will doubted it had ever been like this. He detected the uncertainty beneath Nigel's air of confidence, and smiled wider as he drove, his foot pressing a little harder on the accelerator of his truck.

"Nobody out here right now. Most folks this time of year fish closer to the city at the larger marinas. I still keep my father's boat docked up here," he commented. He drove to a small boat dock on Lake Pontchartrain, seldom used and quiet in the early morning. As he parked the truck, he squinted out over the lake. The sun was just barely starting to peek over the horizon, like a burning ember climbing slowly higher and higher.

"Help me load up the boat," he said as he climbed out.

Will began hefting tackle boxes and a cooler out of the back and handed them to the taller man with a smile.

Trying to juggle the equipment without dropping the precious thermos of coffee still clutched to his chest, Nigel eyed the boat Will had indicated they would be using, his gaze skeptically nervous. The thing looked older than he was. Not that he was old or anything, but still...

"Your father's boat, eh? Not to be critical, darling, but...are you sure it's not going to sink and fucking drown us both the first chance it gets?"

"Hey, I'll have you know I've worked on this boat myself since I was a boy. The engine's in top shape and uh, maybe I've been a little busy at the shop to take her out as much as I used to. But she's a good little boat," Will insisted defensively. Confident he had everything, he piled up everything he could carry and headed down the small wooden ramp to the water's edge.

It really was very small, barely enough room for two people and really more of a fishing boat for one. Will's dad gave it to him when he was fifteen, and he'd just kept it to use when he wanted to come out here and get away from the noise of the city.

As he stepped in, he looked up at Nigel, seeing he still looked extremely uneasy. "Just climb in and sit down. You'll be fine, I promise," he said, smiling. "Besides, I'm a great swimmer. I won't let you drown," he said with a sarcastic snicker.

Standing on the dock, arms still full, Nigel scowled, not appreciating the smirking laughter in Will's blue eyes. "I can fucking swim, *ibuitel*." And he could. Sort of. A little. Ok, not at all, but that wasn't the fucking point, now was it? Handing off the equipment to Will, Nigel fidgeted on the dock, still hesitating. He didn't want Will to think he was a coward or worse still, to ruin their first date before it even began, but Nigel really, *really* didn't enjoy much to do with water beyond a hot shower or a good soak in a steaming tub. Will looked so expectant though and Nigel didn't want to disappoint him. "Fucking hell. Fine then." Reaching out a hand so Will could hold him steady, Nigel snarked, "If you fucking let me go overboard, I *will* spank you."

Will squinted at the Romanian and furrowed his brows. Was he really that nervous? It might be fun to tease him a bit. Strange to see this smooth operator out of his element. Will held his hand firmly, reaching out to steady him with both arms. "Just relax. Bend your knees and sit down on the seat right behind you. I promise, you won't fall," Will drawled slowly, hoping his lowered voice would calm Nigel's nerves. Blue eyes met amber, and he smiled softly at him. No teasing right now, not yet. Though that spanking promise sure did sound... *interesting* .

Letting himself be guided, Nigel settled into his seat and felt that much better for it. The boat, now that he was actually in it, seemed sound enough and logically, he knew Will wouldn't take them out in it if there was any real danger. Nigel just needed to get over himself and relax or he would end up making an ass out of himself and ruining their day in the bargain. Making an effort to do just that, he reached for the thermos Will had thoughtfully placed within easy reach for him, poured a still steaming cup of coffee and lit up a smoke from his pack. Caffeine and nicotine levels replenished, Nigel observed the scenery Will was guiding them through, the greenery and scattered docks and houses hazy still in the early morning mist. "Pretty through here. Peaceful. I can see why people keep coming back even after they get wiped out by storms."

Will found himself staring at Nigel's hands- big, rough, tanned, vascular - trying not to think of that spanking. No, he had to focus on steering them down the bayou and out to a good spot for fishing. Course this was all second nature to him. He licked his lips without thinking and spread his legs wide to get a secure seating.

"Yeah, it was pretty bad here during the last storm before I left home for good. Had to go up to New York to stay with my cousin Adam for a while, but a lot was destroyed. Dad's shop was spared, but we lost the house I grew up in. We were lucky; lotta folk had it much worse." Will raised his eyebrows and shook his head sadly.

“Fishing sounds like about the only thing you and your old man had in common, seeing as how he gave you the boat. Let me guess, it was his one last effort to make a ‘real’ man out of you, right?” Nigel didn’t bother to hide the derision in his voice at the thought of the older Graham and his treatment of his son. From what little Will had told him about the man, he had been a waste of space and not worthy of having fathered the wonderful boy currently piloting the boat taking them deeper into the bayou. It really was beautiful, with the dawn light peeking through the dense foliage and dancing softly across the water, lighting up the boat’s wake in a rainbow of splashing water. “Did he teach you all about the bayou or did you discover most of that on your own?” Nigel could easily picture a much younger Will (alright, not *that* much younger, and *God* didn’t Nigel feel like he was robbing the cradle sometimes when he thought too long about it!) escaping the harassing pressures of an overbearing father by disappearing for hours on end into the bayou, exploring and losing himself in the quiet acceptance of nature.

Will inhaled deeply and sighed as memories washed through his mind at Nigel’s questions; he felt the scorn in the elder man’s voice at the mention of his father and the pang of protectiveness there. It felt foreign to him but good. Will had always looked out for himself. He wondered how it felt to have someone watch over you or defend you, someone like Nigel.

“When I was small he did. He didn’t much approve of me being an artist; thought I was too soft, didn’t like me hanging around my mother so much before she died, and afterward, when I just wanted to stay holed up in my room, he dragged me out. Soon as he gave me this boat I’d take off by myself just to get away from him. Found it peaceful here. Quiet. No one calling me names, no fighting, no punches being thrown. And I could feed myself. So it was kinda the one good thing my fucking waste of a father gave me, I guess you could say,” Will said, a sad smile on his face as he looked over at Nigel.

The sun was coming up warm and full over the water and cast an orange glow over them, bringing out the gold in Nigel’s hair and tawny skin. He looked even more handsome than usual, and it brought out a blush in his cheek as he looked down shyly.

The words spoke of an old hurt, one that had been accepted and internalized long ago and they caused a protective rage to twist hot in Nigel’s gut as he watched this wonderful, shy creature try to shrug away the remembered pain of his lonely childhood. The older man wanted to wrap him up tight in his arms, to offer comfort and the assurance that Will would never have to be alone again if he so chose, if he allowed Nigel to stay. Another part of the Romanian, a much, *much* darker, violent part, wanted to make very sure that he and the elder Mr. Graham crossed paths sometime in the near future. Preferably somewhere dark and private, where no one would hear the screams or care about the blood that would be spilled.

Oh, yes. Should he and Will's father ever happen to meet, there would most *definitely* be blood.

Shaking off his violent musings, for he was sure Will would neither approve nor condone them, Nigel summoned a soft smile for the younger man. "Thank you, Will. Thank you for sharing this with me. I like the idea of being a part of something good in your life. Fuck knows we both could use more of that, yeah?"

Will took a long drink from his coffee thermos and enjoyed the way the warmth settled in his belly. It was comforting and smooth as honey. "Yeah, I know I could. I've never actually ever taken anyone else out here before. Definitely never taken a.. d..well, a date before," he laughed roughly, lines creasing his face as he looked down and blushed at the reference. It seemed silly to call this a date, but it was.

They'd gotten far enough into the bayou that they could safely cast lines now, and fish would be biting in this area, so Will took the tackle box out and started baiting one for Nigel, then one for himself. "I still make all my own lures. Better catch that way, I've found. Never catch anything with pre-made," he said as long, rough fingers deftly moved like a man playing an instrument.

Nigel eyed the pole skeptically but took it when Will held it out, feeling clumsy and awkward, having absolutely zero ideas as to what he was supposed to do next. He could either try and brazen it out and end up looking like a fucking idiot, or just give in gracefully and ask for instruction. Either way, he was probably going to end up looking like an idiot, but the latter option at least offered some hope of lessening that effect. Putting on his best helpless face, Nigel sent pleading eyes towards his companion.

"Darling, I'm afraid you have me at a distinct disadvantage here. I have absolutely no fucking idea what you expect me to do with this. A little help, please?"

Will felt a smug smile come over him at the look on Nigel's face. "Do I sense some of your swagger falling away, Mister Bucharest Badass?" he teased and moved closer.

"You'll stand with your feet *just so* apart, give yourself a stable base. Grab this line with your index finger and keep it taut. Open the reel, keep your tension, and release. Check behind, both hands, grip the rod-like so, bring it up, nice and easy. Keep where you want to go in

your sites, just up ahead. Swing back, up, firm and fluid, and ...release,” he said, casting the line in a perfect arc over their heads and into the water.

“Give it a try. We can cast as many times as you like. Ain’t a rush out here,” Will drawled slowly, shifting his weight to one leg.

Grumbling good-naturedly at the teasing, Nigel did his best to emulate Will’s stance and grip, pulling back and letting the line fly as he cast. Or tried to, at any rate. The lure sailed out at a crazy angle to land a scant few feet from the boat, hitting the water with a depressing plop. Cursing softly, Nigel began reeling it back in, doing his best to manfully ignore the snickering coming from the man beside him. “That was just fucking practice, smart ass. Not nice to kick a man while he’s down, you know.”

Having managed to get the line back in, Nigel gave it another shot, careful to try and do exactly as Will had shown him. And got pretty much the same results. “Ok, what the fuck am I doing wrong? Quite laughing and help me out here, gorgeous.” Nigel put on an exasperated expression, but he was having a hard time not laughing himself. He imagined he looked fucking ridiculous, but it was worth it to see the delighted happiness on Will’s face.

Will was enjoying his distinct advantage over Nigel too much but didn’t want to push it, after all, his goal was to make this fun enough that the man would want to come do it again with him if all went well. He cast his own and handed it to Nigel, reeling in the sad line bobbing forlornly. “Let’s just try to catch something first. We’ll come back to casting in a bit, shall we?” he said.

Will had a bite of his own, and sure enough, soon so did Nigel. “This in and of itself is a lesson; reeling it in without losing it. Hold on to yours; I’ll get mine in first. Watch, okay?” Will instructed.

“Just relax, leave the rod at about a 45-degree angle, and let the rod do the work. As soon as the fish stops taking line off, start reeling in, okay?” He began doing exactly that, biceps glistening in the rising sun as he braced himself and slowly raised the pole, keeping the tip up as he wound in the reel.

Nigel watched, trying very hard not to be distracted by the working muscles glistening with a fine layer of sweat as they bulged and bunched, the younger man’s strength obvious as he

worked to land his catch, whatever was on the line was putting up quite a fight. He tried, really he did, to pay attention to the technique Will was demonstrating for him, but it was so damned hard. And watching him was making *Nigel* hard.

You would think that with all his experience in his former line of work, Nigel would have learned by now that allowing himself to become distracted from the task at hand *always* ended up with him landing flat on his ass.

Totally lost in the display before him, the Romanian had completely forgotten about the rod he held, his grip going lax and allowing the pole to sag dangerously. Which was when his own line gave a mighty jerk, the reel squealing loudly as the whole thing was ripped from his hands. With a shouted curse, Nigel instinctively lunged after it, not thinking, just reacting, forgetting that he was in a tiny, (fuck, it was fucking *tiny* damn it) boat in the middle of the big bad bayou. Also slipping his mind, most inconveniently, was the fact that he couldn't *fucking swim*.

Things went downhill from there.

Will had just brought his own catch in, the fish fighting him as he swung his line over when he'd heard a crash behind him. He turned just in time to see Nigel's flailing limbs and shocked face slip under the water.

"Fuck!" he shouted. He expertly cracked the fish on the head, tossed it into the bucket, set his pole down, and looked out over the edge at the man thrashing wildly.

It was obvious within seconds that the Romanian definitely could not swim. He was panicking, arms flailing wildly, gasping for air.

"Shit!"

Will ripped off his tee-shirt and jumped overboard without a second thought, diving beneath the man and getting his arms up under him from behind to drag him back to the boat. As soon as he had an arm wrapped securely around Nigel's chest, Will used all his strength to pull his head above water and swam back towards the boat, dragging the bigger man with him.

Hoisting him over the edge, He got his bulky body back up and then pulled himself into the boat, panting hard from the exertion. “Fuck, fuck, shit,” he gasped, slapping Nigel’s cheek to see if he was breathing.

Eyes fluttering open, Nigel managed to glare up at his rescuer for all of ten seconds before he rolled over and violently gave back to the bayou all the water he had taken in during his thankfully brief plunge into its murky depths. Finished, he flopped back over onto his back and lay with his eyes closed and chest heaving, his lungs greedily sucking in the humid air they had been denied. Cracking one eye open, he took up the glare that had been momentarily interrupted. “Darling, please tell me I’m not going to catch some horrible disease or nasty parasite from swallowing half your precious swamp.” He tried for playful, wanting to ease some of the concern on the younger man’s face but wasn’t sure how successful he was. Groaning, he wiped at his lips, “God, my mouth tastes like mud...”

Will hovered over Nigel, brows twisted in concern, but as soon as he saw him gasp and spit up water, he was relieved.

“You’re fine. I’ll check you for leeches, that’s the main thing. Drink some water, beer, that’s all you need to do.” Will opened a new bottle of water and handed it to him, helping him sit up. “Jesus, Nigel. You should’ve told me you couldn’t swim. You could’ve died.”

Swishing his mouth out and spitting the foul swamp taste away, Nigel drank thirstily, finishing the bottle in seconds. “Shoulda, woulda, coulda. If I had a dollar for every time I should have or could have died...” Nigel let the sentence trail off with a grimace. “Let’s just say I’d have a fuckton more money than I could ever hope to spend and leave it at that, shall we?” Combing his wet hair back out of his face, Nigel suddenly grinned at Will. “Oh, you’ve gone and fucking done it now, bayou boy. You save my sorry ass and now you’re stuck with me. According to the Chinese, you interfered with my fate and now you’re responsible for me.” Laughing uproariously at the expression on Will’s face, Nigel added in mock sympathy. “Poor fucking you!”

Will raised one eyebrow and grabbed a couple of towels, using one to wipe his face dry and tossing the other to Nigel. “Calm down there, city boy. Swim or not, I’m still gonna teach you to fish. Drink some more of that water and settle down,” he smirked.

He tried to be casual about it, but Will couldn't help but look the man up and down. His wet clothes clung to his body obscenely, especially in all the right places. Chest hair matted against his now mostly open shirt, and his shorts clung to long legs. He wanted to suggest he take off his shirt at least to dry off, but he didn't want to appear too eager, either. Will, on the other hand, was tan from spending quite a bit of time shirtless, and the sun was up and shining by now, glittering in water droplets across his back and down his freckled arms.

Nigel grinned, enjoying their banter as well as the view. Along with the generous amount of skin Will was showing off, his ink was now on full display and it was beautiful. On one shoulder soared a bird, deep indigo with feathers outlined with ebony and spread in flight as it seemed to dance around and between bars of music. It was joyous in its depiction and you could almost hear the freedom of the bird's song. On Will's back, covering almost the whole of one shoulder blade, was a far more somber work. Done entirely in black with only shades and shadows of gray to give it depth and perspective, a compass overlaying an old world map with stark lines of latitude and longitude. While the bluebird was easy to decipher, Nigel would need to ask Will what had driven him to have such a declaration embedded into his skin. The older man had a feeling its meaning was deeper and far more angry.

But not today. Not now. Not when Will was finally relaxing and having fun. Even if it was a little bit at Nigel's expense. "Fucking cruel, darling. Where's your empathy? Like you said, I could have died and yet, without so much as a blink, you order me back to the very activity that has-wait... *did you say fucking leeches?????*" Nigel couldn't help the way his voice rose at the end, nor the slight hint of horror that may or may not have been creeping in. Standing up abruptly, and almost tipping himself out of the boat again in the process, Nigel began tearing at his clothes, struggling with the sodden, clinging cloth, managing barely to get his shirt off without tearing it too much. "Fuck fuck fucking FUCK!!!!"

Will reached out to grab Nigel's arms to steady the adorably panicked man. "Hey, hey, hey, relax, there. I don't want you falling over again. I'll check ya thoroughly, don't you worry," he said with a grin. "Kinda like where this is goin anyway," he said in a quieter voice. Nigel had an incredible body, you couldn't deny it, long and lean. Not glamorous, but rough and masculine, pure alpha male. Almost beastly. Broad, bronze chest with thick sinew and corded muscle, dusted in dark fur flecked with silvery gold. He was going to enjoy checking Nigel for *leeches*.

Relaxing a bit now that he could see that at least his upper half was leech-free, Nigel grinned self-consciously. He was a bit embarrassed over his little freak-out, but damn it, he really, *really* hated all things creepy-crawly and/or slithery. In fact, it would be an understatement to say the Romanian and Nature did not get along in the slightest.

A few deep breaths later and Will's words finally registered. As did the fact that Will was still touching him, holding tight to his arms as if he didn't want to let go. "Do you now, love?" Feeling a bit bolstered by the other man's obvious and heated gaze, Nigel returned the look with equal heat. And if he leaned in just a wee bit closer, well, Will didn't seem to mind. "If that's the case, I guess I'll manage then. As long as you promise to be very, very thorough later." Lowering his voice to a deep rumble, the older man purred suggestively, "Don't know that I'd be able to rest easy tonight without knowing you had checked *every single inch of me...*"

Will was suddenly not as interested in the whole teaching a man to fish business as he'd been a minute earlier, and he could feel the front of his shorts tighten at Nigel's suggestive words and tone. They'd still only kissed so far, and it was one hell of a kiss.

He stood and bent down in front of Nigel rather deliberately to secure the poles, make sure the boat was set to cruise quietly, then walked back carefully over to Nigel to sit next to him with a cat-like grin. "Alright, sailor, how about you lay back and let me make sure nothin's hitchin a ride on you. Spread 'em," he chuckled, nodding at him to open his legs.

Surprised by the rather forward response to his flirting, Nigel hesitated, searching the younger man's expression for any sign that this wasn't something Will really wanted. Mostly hesitant and shy up until this moment, the sudden change in Will's behavior was unexpected but not unwanted. Seeing nothing but playful desire in the other man's eyes, Nigel leaned back, bracing his arms against the sides of the little boat and allowed his legs to fall open with a murmured, "Whatever you say, Captain." He was more than eager to see where Will was planning on taking this.

Will felt a bit powerful being in this position. He was in control of the ship, he'd just saved Nigel's life, he would likely be bringing home their dinner, and here he was about to play doctor in a manner of speaking. He liked this. He squatted down by Nigel's feet and took off his glasses, tucked them in the nest of damp curls atop his head, and took one ankle, gently turning it over. He ran both hands over it as he examined, his touch trailing up each calf and proceeding up his thighs. Grabbing a nearby towel, he dried him off as he went.

"A little muddy, but no critters so far," he said, looking up through his lashes as his hands got closer to the Romanian's upper thighs. Rough fingertips teased beneath the fabric of his shorts. "I have to be thorough. You *understand*, right?"

Swallowing hard, Nigel held himself very, very still, barely daring to breathe as he felt those long, calloused fingers and wide palms sliding over his skin. The slow, firm glide tickled the fine hairs on his legs, sending goosebumps and shivers over the rest of the older man's body. Before now, before *Will*, Nigel would have never guessed such a simple touch could send sharp desire through him, over him, hardening him painfully. Clearing his throat roughly, his reply was low and far more breathy than he would have liked. "Fucking absolutely, darling. Thorough is good. Thorough is fucking excellent."

Will exhaled hard through his nostrils, which flared as he did, and his hands dared to wander to the front of Nigel's shorts. Specifically, the fly.

"These are soaked. It would be ideal if we could at least open them up, just so I can check, everywhere," he said, and without waiting to ask, bit his lip and looked into Nigel's eyes as he started to pull down the zipper slowly.

The very thick cock inside was visibly growing harder, much to Will's absolute delight, and the apples of his cheeks reddened with arousal as he tugged it completely open.

"Oh..." the sound was nearly inaudible, just a roundness made with lips pursed and a puff of air that passed in a gasp.

Will's hand met with the thin fabric of a pair of silky, dark boxer briefs that melded completely over his rigid, hot flesh. Kittenish red lips curled at the edges as he tugged them down lower, finally reaching in with full commitment. Blue eyes looked up to meet amber, and his rough palm curved to form a grip around an uncut, veiny, dark olive, and quite impressively sized cock that seemed to grow even as he pulled it out completely. He slowly dragged his hand down to the base and up again, watching Nigel's face for a reaction as he did so, the very tip of a pink tongue held out against his lips in anticipation.

Even through the thin material of his boxer briefs, the first touch of Will's hand had Nigel tensing with pleasure, his cock throbbing and his gut tightening with need. Forcing himself to remain still, resisting (barely, *oh fucking God*, just barely) the urge to thrust and grind himself against the hand that now held his naked flesh in a heated palm, the older man cursed softly under his breath. "What are you doing to me, angel? Can't remember the last time I've gotten this fucking hard this damned fast." Doing nothing to hide the desire coursing through his veins, Nigel let everything he felt, the wonder and the lust and maybe the beginnings of something more show on his face. Letting out the moan that built in his chest as Will gave

him another stroke, Nigel leaned down and caught the kneeling man's lips in a dirty, desperate kiss. Pulling back only enough to allow speech, he murmured softly, "This only goes as far as you want to take it, darling. You stop when you want to, no questions, no consequences. Ok?"

Will nodded softly and scooted just a little closer to make it easier on himself, change the angle just slightly. "Yeah, of course, darlin. This is pretty hot, I gotta say. Feel a little shy. Never done anythin like this out in the open before, where all the wildlife can watch us like this. And you look...you look *damn* sexy, Nigel," Will said in a low, breathy voice. He felt he was no good at sexy talk, but all the same, he tried, thumbing a rough pad over the slit at his cockhead.

He pressed his palm flat against the ridge of his stiff member, curling his fingers back all the way around and tugging down slowly before increasing the speed for a while. It was just a slow, steady slapping sound of his hand on skin, and soon Will started rolling Nigel's balls in his other hand too. They were furry and hung loose in the warm, wet air of the bayou, golden hair glistening over wrinkled skin that grew a little fatter as the minutes ticked by. Will looked up when he dared, watching Nigel's face and gauging his reactions to everything he did, trying to read him and adjust his every ministrations by what he liked, what made his breath catch and pulse race faster.

"Oh fuck, baby..." Sweat was running in rivulets down his temple, beading on the upper lip Nigel drew between teeth in an effort to stifle the groans that Will seemed to pull from him so easily with every stroke of his hand. "You're so fucking beautiful and you feel so goddamn good touching me." Nigel could feel the familiar coil of heat building in his gut, the impending orgasm barreling forward like a freight train on rails. This was going to be over embarrassingly fast but he couldn't hold back. It was too good, too much pleasure. He had been leaking heavily from almost the first touch of Will's hand, the precome making the glide wet and perfect. Add to that the vision on the beautiful younger man kneeling in front of him, eyes dark and blown with lust, lips bitten and wet and the outcome was a foregone conclusion.

"Gorgeous, *nnnggghhh*... fucking perfect." Panting heavily now, hips giving helpless little thrusts up into the hands driving him to completion, Nigel could only groan and give in to what this shy, unconsciously sensual man was doing to him. "Fuck, it's too good, baby. You're gonna make me come so fucking hard for you..."

While Will was new at this, he could tell Nigel was going to come soon, and he really was enjoying having this control. He didn't feel like giving it up so soon. He brought his mouth

down lower, teasingly so, close enough to spit quickly, a hot bead of saliva landing on Nigel which he quickly worked up and down his shaft. Will then clenched his fist in a tight circle all the way to the base, squeezing. He leaned back on his heel, lips curled in a smirk as he allowed seconds to pass, the cool air undoubtedly causing the wet spit on Nigel's skin to get a bit chilly.

Will knew he must look weird, still shirtless, and he wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. "Maybe I'm not ready for you to come yet, you ever thinka that?" he drawled slowly, reaching up to drag his nails down Nigel's bare chest, through the thick hair, and around a nipple, pinching it lightly. Still one hand with a death grip on his dick, he pumped slowly. Languorously so.

Breath hitching, Nigel watched with wide eyes as Will's mouth came perilously close to his dick, teasing his turgid flesh with soft puffs of warm, moist air. And what Will did next nearly short-circuited the older man's brain, the filthy action so hot Nigel could only groan as he tipped closer and closer to the edge. Only to be brought to an abrupt stop when the other man's hand sank to the base of him and tightened almost painfully, strangling his orgasm with a smirk. The teasing words made Nigel's eyes narrow and his own mouth twist in a rueful smile. "What a wicked, dirty boy you are, darling. I didn't know you could be so cruel."

Will was obviously enjoying himself and the control he had over Nigel in this moment. And, much to his surprise, Nigel realized he was enjoying it just as much. More accustomed to being the dominant partner in any and all sexual encounters, this was a new experience for the Romanian, one he was playing by ear, taking his cues from the man kneeling between his legs and driving him crazy. Reaching out with one hand, Nigel ran the tips of his fingers gently along Will's bearded jaw, his gaze thoughtful, considering. "You're changing me, *ibuitel*. Part of me wants nothing more than to fist my fingers in your hair and hold you still while I fuck that pretty mouth of yours, make you finish what you've started. Pound my cock into the wet heat of you until I cum so far down your throat you'll never get the taste of me out."

With a smirk, Nigel let his hand fall away and leaned back, letting his legs fall further open in a lazy sprawl. "But a bigger part of me, the part you seem to have laid claim to... *that* part is damn near fucking *desperate* to see what you'll do next."

Those words spoken through the rough, deeply accented voice made the blood rush to Will's dick so fast he got dizzy. There was a real power sizzling under the muscle and skin of this

dark and still somewhat mysterious man that had captured his heart. While he wanted to explore more of this, he also longed to feel something else.

Even if it didn't happen here, he wanted *that*. All that Nigel just described. He felt a raw shiver up his spine at the mention of it, and the flash of an image entered his mind - him on all fours, spine bowed, and Nigel's hand wrapped around his throat, his other hand on his hip, cock deep inside, fucking him rough and hard.

Will's cheeks burned bright red just at the idea. Breathlessly, he fluttered inky black lashes up at Nigel. "That...so?" he said, arching an eyebrow playfully. Keeping his eyes fixed on Nigel's, he lowered his mouth again, but this time all the way, licking his lips quickly before wrapping silky lips around his cockhead and taking him fully into the wet heat of his mouth. Slowly, inch by inch, he let the thick, uncut member fill him until the head hit the back of his throat and he gave a little cough in a surprised sputter.

Blue eyes watered just slightly, but he refused to stop. Moving his tongue, he laved it underneath, over his bottom teeth to shield him, massaging the thick vein that rippled up the front of the shaft.

"Hmmm..." he hummed, his mouth full as saliva began to drip from the corners of his very full mouth, and he bobbed his head up and down.

"*Oh fucking Jesus!*" Nigel's hands where white-knuckled where they gripped the sides of the little boat, the pain of the edges cutting into his palms a welcome counterpoint the sudden rush of pleasure screaming along his nerves and threatening to make his eyes roll back in his head. But he didn't want to miss a single second of watching the gorgeous man so determinately devouring his cock. Will's inexperience was obvious, his movements unsure and sloppy as he worked his mouth over Nigel's throbbing length, and somehow it only made him more beautiful to the older man. Sweet and almost innocent and so fucking hot it was driving Nigel insane.

That reaction was good. Perfect, and it gave Will just the confidence he needed to keep going. He shoved the heel of his hand over his own burgeoning erection and swallowed just at the moment he had Nigel's cockhead pressed once again at the back of his throat, enough that he'd be able to feel his throat muscles ripple as his tongue pressed upward. Getting a little cocky, he pulled his hand away from the base of Nigel's turgid flesh; it had been giving him about an inch of relief having his hand down there, but he quite deliberately looked up

through wet lashes at Nigel as he wrapped both arms behind his back and gripped his wrist. A bit like he'd look were he *tied up*. It was an experiment, and he wondered if he could actually pull it off.

Determined, he carefully timed his breathing as he bobbed up and down, spine bowed just enough to give him leverage as he kneeled between Nigel's spread thighs. He deepened his movement until he was once again right there, that thick, uncut head pressed against his throat, and almost daring himself, he held it there. One thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three...just like being underwater, right?

He held it until he saw spots, and then a second more, and finally came up gasping desperately for oxygen. "*Fuck...*" he panted, grinning wickedly. "Good?"

Good???? Pleasure was running riot through Nigel's body, heating his blood to a boil, melting his bones (and he was pretty certain his brain, *God* the way Will looked choking on his cock...just *fuck!!!*) and the dirty little angel kneeling at his feet wanted to know if it was bloody fucking *good*? Rather than verbalize his response, Nigel pried his hands free from the death grip he had on the boat's edges and buried his long fingers in the soft curls that had been teasing his thighs for the last few minutes, jerking Will's face up to meet his as he lunged forward and down. The kiss was messy and brutal, all teeth and tongue as all the pent up need Nigel felt was fed into Will's mouth from his own. Nigel had been *patient*. Had stifled his natural urge to dominate, allowed the younger man to play with him, let him push the limits of Nigel's control. And it had been very, very enjoyable. But his patience had finally reached its limit. Playtime was *over*.

Pulling back just enough to speak, he held Will's gaze with his own, making little to no effort to dampen the heat he knew had to be turning his eyes dark and molten with lust. "You have a choice here darling. Just. One." The deep rumble of his own voice didn't surprise Nigel. In fact, he was amazed he was even able to form words at this point he was so far gone. "I'm going to come sometime inside the next two goddamn minutes, and that's a fucking fact. But, generous soul that I am, I'm more than happy to let you decide how that happens. Your mouth," here Nigel pressed a wet kiss to Will's lips, tongue sliding in and out quickly in demonstration before pulling back to continue, "your hands, or," leaning back, Nigel gave his cock, dripping and near purple with need, several long strokes, "by my own while you watch. Your choice, love."

Will knew he wasn't experienced enough to know how to handle taking come in his mouth, not yet and not out here in the water, but he wanted to be a little more involved than just watching.

“My hands,” he blurted out a little too eagerly, his voice rough from the beating he’d been giving his throat. “I want to use my hands.”

To prove his point, he shimmied a little closer and bit his swollen, wet lower lip and took Nigel’s hands off his dick rather boldly, replacing them with his own. Long, slender fingers curled around the darker, delicate skin and his lashes lowered as he watched with a mix of lust and fascination as the foreskin slid over the rigid organ, up and down. He wasn’t going to tease Nigel anymore, so his strokes were fast and his grip tight, and he spit again into the narrow channel his fist made, letting it become nice and slippery.

Big blue eyes looked up again to catch Nigel’s gaze as he free left hand found his balls and started rolling them loosely in his palm, catching a bit of skin between thumb and forefinger, rubbing it, his breath getting thicker as he followed Nigel’s every gasp and twitch and moan.

“Tell me what you want. *Anything.* ”

Breath coming faster now as his orgasm rushed towards him, Nigel’s laugh had a dark, desperate edge to it that seemed to echo through the humid bayou air even as it lingered in the scant space between them. Reaching down with one hand, he cupped Will’s cheek, his touch as gentle as his words were rough. “Ah, *ibuitel*, don’t you know that’s a dangerous thing to say to a man like me? *Anything* sounds too much like *everything* and you are far too fucking tempting. Glutton that I am, there’s no way I could resist taking all that you offer and still I would want *more*. ” Running the pad of his thumb over the younger man’s full lower lip, he smiled ruefully. “But perhaps, for now, I could settle for marking you. Would you let me do that, Will? Would you let me paint your beautiful cheeks with my seed, let me smear your lips with the proof of what you do to me? It would be so fucking *hot* to watch my pleasure drip down your skin, Will. Just the *idea* of it...” Nigel’s voice trailed off into a low moan of need, the mental images of Will’s face dripping with his cum driving the older man right to the edge.

It was the break in Nigel’s voice that almost did it for Will, almost had him coming in his shorts like a schoolboy. He bit down hard on his lower lip, nearly hard enough to draw blood, and crouched lower beneath Nigel, looking up with wet eyes darkened with need.

“Come on my face, then, *mon cher*,” he drawled, low slow and thick, letting the words curl over his tongue like smoke.

His strokes grew faster, more purposeful, cheeks flushed and sweat beading up along his brow, damp curls starting to cling to his forehead as he worked. His biceps flexed, but his rhythm never faltered, even when he leaned down and tilted his head to lick a broad stripe with a wide, dexterous tongue over Nigel’s furry blond balls. The second he felt them twitch, he pulled back just enough, mouth open wantonly, looking up with big doe eyes at the man.

The doe eyes, the lazy Cajun drawl, the quick pace of Will’s strokes, they all goaded Nigel to let go, to fall into the abyss of passion that nipped viciously at his heels, but it was that wicked, wicked tongue that did him in. The wet glide of heat had his balls drawing up and that was it. With a shout, Nigel’s pleasure erupted, pulsing from him in waves to splash against the flushed skin and wet lips that parted eagerly to receive it all.

Breath coming in pants and moans as Will stroked him through the last of it, Nigel was half convinced his mind had exploded right along with his balls. Capturing Will’s hands with his own when pleasure began to tip into oversensitivity, Nigel raised them to his lips to press kiss after kiss to the other man’s knuckles. “Jesus God, how are you so fucking perfect?”

Will leaned into the kisses like a needy cat, pleased with Nigel’s reaction. He smirked and wiped his chin and beard with the back of his hand. “I could say the same, ya know. Now, if I can just teach you to catch a goddamn fish without drowning, we’ll be getting somewhere,” he chuckled, brows raised, a sparkle in his eyes even as he said it. His cheeks were rosy, heart pounding, chest flushed...Will felt happy, really happy and relaxed with Nigel. It was something he hadn’t felt much in his life.

This was *good*.

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